



Congressman

Gene Green

Reports

29th Congressional District of Texas

Fall 2005

Dear Friend,

This newsletter announces the second series of town hall meetings for 2005. You are welcome to attend any or all of our meetings. The meetings are scheduled at various times and locations throughout our district. The schedule also includes special meetings including a Health Fair, a Paying for College Workshop, a Senior Citizens Issues Forum, the annual Immunization Day and annual Military Academy Day.

This newsletter discusses the federally qualified health care clinics in our district as well as flood control and highway projects. There are many issues facing our nation and community. I hope you will attend one of these town hall meetings so I can hear your views and concerns.

It is an honor to serve you. I look forward to seeing you at a town hall meeting. You do not have to wait for a town hall meeting to contact us; we are as close as your phone. Please feel free to call us at any of our offices listed below.

Sincerely,

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Town Hall Meetings

Monday, August 15th @ 7:00 p.m.

Evelyn J. Churchill Community Center
in conjunction w/ Galena Manor Civic Club, 1508 Hunter Street

Wednesday, August 17th @ 10:00 a.m.

Senior Citizens Issues Forum
Northeast Community Center,
James Driver Park, 10918 1/2 Bentley

Wednesday, August 17th @ 6:30 p.m.

Aldine Y.O.U.T.H. Center, 4700 Aldine Mail Rt.

Thursday, August 18th @ 7:00 p.m.

Stanaker Library, 611 Macario Garcia
in conjunction w/ East End Civic Club

Saturday, August 20th @ 9:00 a.m.

USW Local 4227 Union Hall
704 Pasadena Freeway, Pasadena

Saturday, August 20th @ 11:00 a.m.

Sterling Municipal Library, Mary Elizabeth Wilbanks Ave.
Baytown

Monday, August 22nd @ 7:00 p.m.

Northline Park HPD Storefront, 392 West Little York

Tuesday, August 23rd @ 7:00 p.m.

HPD East Freeway Storefront, 12001-A East Freeway

OFFICE ADDRESSES

2335 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1688
Fax: 202-225-9903

256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy .E
Suite 29
Houston, TX 77060
281-999-5879
Fax: 281-999-5716

11811 I-10 East, Suite 430
Houston, TX, 77029
713-330-0761
Fax: 713-330-0807

www.house.gov/green/

PAYING FOR COLLEGE WORKSHOP

Attention Parents & High School Students

Please join me and a special guest from the Sallie Mae Fund for an information workshop on paying for college. Your child's education is important and we want to make sure you have access to information regarding financial aid and scholarships.

Monday, September 19
7:00pm - 9:00pm
Cesar Chavez High School
501 Howard Drive

Medicare Will Rollout New Benefits

Medicare beneficiaries will soon begin receiving information in the mail about Medicare's new prescription drug benefit, which will go into effect on January 1, 2006. Beneficiaries on limited incomes will receive information from the Social Security Administration by August to help them determine if they are eligible for low-cost drug coverage. In October, Medicare will send all beneficiaries a handbook with information on the Medicare prescription drug benefit. At this time, beneficiaries can compare the coverage options available in our area by calling 1-800-633-4227 or visiting www.medicare.gov.

The first open enrollment period for the prescription drug benefit will begin on November 15, 2005. While enrollment is voluntary, current Medicare beneficiaries should keep in mind that they may be charged higher premiums or a penalty if they enroll after May 15, 2006. Current beneficiaries in the Medicare discount drug card program can use their discount card until May 15, or until they sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan.

The benefit requires an annual \$250 deductible and a 25% co-payment of annual drug costs up to \$2,250. For drug costs between \$2,250 and \$5,100, beneficiaries are responsible for 100 percent. Taking into account the co-payments and the deductible, Medicare beneficiaries must pay approximately \$3,600 of their first \$5,100 in drug costs. After a beneficiary's drug costs reach \$5,100, he or she must pay a 5% co-payment, with Medicare covering 95% of the costs.

Medicare beneficiaries who currently receive their prescription drugs from Medicaid should also keep in mind that they will receive drug coverage from Medicare beginning January 1, 2006. These beneficiaries - known as "dual-eligibles" - can enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan that fully subsidizes prescription drug premiums

Protecting Social Security is a Priority

Social Security is not in a crisis. According to the most recent Social Security Trustees' Report, Social Security payroll taxes will contribute to a growing surplus in the Social Security Trust Fund until 2017. At that time, the program will have more than \$3.7 trillion in the Trust Fund. Combined with incoming payroll tax revenues, this accumulated Social Security surplus will be able to provide full benefits until 2041.

The Administration's plan to carve-out private accounts from Social Security would force the government to borrow an additional \$5 trillion over the first 20 years of private accounts. President Bush has now added reductions in benefits for the 70% of future retirees who earn over \$20,000 per year, a proposal called progressive price indexing.

If the Administration's partial privatization plan were in effect today, nearly 2 million Texans would see reduced Social Security checks. The average monthly benefit cut for Texans would be \$251, and the benefit reduction for each Texan opting for a private account would be \$654 a month. Instead of embracing a risky privatization plan, we should make the small changes necessary to maintain Social Security as a safety net that offers a minimum standard of living for senior citizens, disabled individuals and surviving spouses.



At a recent veterans town hall meeting Congressman Green discussed veterans issues at VFW Post 472

Pasadena Health Center Named a Federally-Qualified Health Center

On April 11, 2005, the Department of Health and Human Services named the Pasadena Health Center (PHC) a Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHC). This designation is the result of years of hard work by PHC and the Harris County Community Access Collaborative to increase access to quality and affordable health care for the uninsured.

The Pasadena Health Center was one of four health clinics in Harris County to receive FQHC status. In addition to PHC, the Northeast Community Health Clinic, located at 4514 Lyons Avenue, will receive federal funding beginning in December, 2005. This FQHC designation will bring \$622,550 in annual federal funding to PHC to support its delivery of primary health care to uninsured and underinsured populations. These clinics join El Centro de Corazon's Eastwood Clinic and La Roca's clinic in Denver Harbor, which currently receive federal funding under the FQHC program.

FQHCs deliver preventive and primary care to patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Almost 40 percent of health center clients have no health insurance coverage, and others have inadequate health coverage. FQHCs set charges for health care services according to clients' income. Our goal is to have an FQHC in other neighborhoods to join the four we have now.

10TH ANNUAL IMMUNIZATION DAY

Saturday, August 13

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Please join Rep. Green to discuss preventive health initiatives before Congress. Free immunizations will be given to children within the 29th Congressional District at the following locations:

Carrillo Elementary School
960 S. W ayside
HOUSTON ISD

Green Valley Elementary
1350 W oodforest
GALENA PARK ISD

Oleson Elementary School
1235 V ickery Street
ALDINE ISD

****HEALTH FAIR****

Congressman Green invites you to join him for a series of preventive health screenings. These screenings will help you determine whether you are at risk for diabetes, hypertension, and aneurysms, as well as cholesterol, vision and dental problems. Early detection and prevention are the best ways to combat these common health problems. Congressman Green and staff will be available to answer questions on Federal Health Insurance programs.

Friday, August 19
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Baggett Community Bldg
1302 Keene, Galena Park

Green Continues Effort to Preserve Buffalo Bayou

Over the past five years, I have worked to preserve Buffalo Bayou as Houston's historic waterway for transportation, industry, and commerce. The National Park Service (NPS) has begun to study the feasibility of creating a National Heritage Area along the Buffalo Bayou. Once that study is completed, legislation will be introduced to designate the Buffalo Bayou a National Heritage Area, a distinction that will bring \$1 million annually for ten years to the Buffalo Bayou project to supplement local efforts to revitalize the Buffalo Bayou area.

In the last few years, nearly \$2 million in federal funding has been secured for land acquisition along the Buffalo Bayou. In 2003, \$700,000 was secured for the purchase of land for Buffalo Bend Nature Park, which was dedicated in late 2004. Last year \$1.2 million was secured for further land acquisition along the Buffalo Bayou at Lockwood Drive in an effort to increase green space along the bayou. These projects are in partnership with Harris County and the City of Houston.

During this year's appropriations process, additional funds are requested for two land acquisition projects along Houston's bayous. These two include \$350,000 necessary for the expansion of Hidalgo Park along the Buffalo Bayou in Houston's East End and, \$400,000 to help acquire two acres of land along Brays Bayou to increase the city's parkland and create a gateway to historic Harrisburg, the birthplace of Houston.



Congressman Gene Green congratulates Andrew Harris from Pasadena H.S. for winning first place in the Congressional Art Competition.

District Water Projects and Port of Houston

On May 24, 2005, the House of Representatives approved the Energy and Water Appropriations bill (H.R. 2419). Our area secured funding for three important projects in the bill: the Houston Ship Channel deepening and widening project (\$26 million), the Hunting Bayou Federal flood control project (\$500,000) and the Greens Bayou Federal flood control project (\$150,000). The Houston Ship Channel Deepening and Widening Project received \$26 million in construction funding and \$3.2 million for operations and maintenance.

The bill's funding is especially important for Hunting and Greens Bayou, since they were saved from cuts in the Administration's budget. Greens Bayou is also the location for a major locally-funded project by the Harris County Flood Control District, including two detention ponds being constructed in the Aldine area, and an additional four detention ponds along Greens Bayou upstream of US90.

On July 14, 2005, the House approved the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2005 which included language for the Halls Bayou Federal Flood Control Project to allow the Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) to conduct federal projects on Halls Bayou.

Air Quality Issues

A January investigation by the Houston Chronicle raised serious questions about the level of air toxics in Houston's air, especially in communities near refinery and chemical facilities. Our office participated in several public meetings on the issue. In the months following these meetings, some companies have made public commitments to reduce air toxic emissions. We will need to ensure that they meet these commitments.

In response, House energy bill, H.R. 6 was amended to include the National Cancer Institute in a study of the health effects on individuals in proximity to refineries and petrochemical plants. H.R. 6 has been approved by the House of Representatives and now we are waiting for a conference with the Senate. Congressman Green has also asked the Congress to approve \$1 million in federal funding for a City of Houston study, which would install additional community air monitors to help us know what is in our air and how to best reduce pollution to improve public health.

On the federal level, there are several air quality improvements on the way from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Clean Air Act of 1990. These include Houston's own air quality plan, along with new regulations to reduce air toxics. EPA officials have made commitments that these improvements will come to Houston on-time. The Houston State Implementation Plan (SIP) required by EPA has a 70-80% reduction in emissions of nitrous oxides and volatile organic compounds from industrial sources by 2009. The Texas Air Quality Study, using over-flights of planes with advanced pollution detection equipment, will tell us more about our air quality and help implement the SIP effectively. EPA will also establish several national risk-based standards for many petrochemical processes under the Clean Air Act. For example, the Hazardous Organic (HON) National Emissions Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) will be issued by the end of 2005 and enforced by the end of 2006.

Freight Rail Issues

Remote Control Rail

In June 2005, Congressman Gene Green introduced H.R. 2843 to ban the transportation of hazardous material by trains conducted via remote control.

Remote control trains are a relatively new technology that is still being studied by the Federal Railroad Association (FRA) in order to verify its safety. Studies released by the FRA have shown that this new technology has problems and needs further review. Since hazardous materials present very high safety and security risks new, not fully-tested technology should not be used to transport these dangerous materials until the safety is proven.

Congressman Green also has contacted both major Houston railroads, Union Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), urging them to restrict any remote control operations to their rail yards since the FRA has raised specific safety concerns about remote operations outside railyards and in communities. So far UP and BNSF have stated they will use remote control only within their railyards.

Rail Reorganization Project

Harris County, the Port of Houston, the City of Houston, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Houston area Congressional delegation are all collaborating on a "Harris County Freight Railroad Corridors and Urban Mobility Program." The purpose of the plan is to reduce the impacts of freight rail on affected communities and improve the operation of railroads for their customers.

The East End and other close-in areas that have numerous dangerous grade-crossings need to be a priority in this process. The East End Rail Task Force, that works on freight rail issues in the East End and which involves members of the community, will continue to stay involved as these major projects go forward. If you would like more information about the project or the East End Rail Task Force, please contact our office at 281-999-5879.

Congressman Green will be in attendance at the East End Rail Task Force Meeting on August 16, 2005 at 7:00p.m. at the Ripley House Senior Center located at 4410 Navigation Blvd.

Attention High School Students

Students interested in applying to any of the U.S. Service Academies should plan to attend the Annual Academy Day. Academy representatives will be available to answer questions, and provide informational materials about the academies and the application process.

U.S. Service Academy Day
Saturday, September 10
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Houston Community College, Southeast Campus
Angela Morales Building, Lecture Hall
6815 Rustic and Gulf Freeway

Hwy 90 and Clinton Drive Project

After several years of work, the House and Senate appear very close to completing work on a federal highway bill. As in previous years, the bill includes two projects to benefit the 29th District : 1) reconstruction of Clinton Dr. from Federal Rd. to W ayside Dr. and 2) construction of 6 main lanes of US 90 from Beltway 8 (Wallisville) to I-10 (at Hunting Bayou). Both projects will cost over \$30 million and will be accomplished with 80% federal funding.

The Clinton Dr. reconstruction project will repair the damage created due to heavy truck traffic, reduce bottlenecks, and increase safety with the addition of left turn lanes. The US 90 project will complete a major east-west project for East Harris County that has been planned for many years and support residential and commercial development along the entire project corridor.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

M.C.
Presorted Standard
W/S Carrier Route

Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E, Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero.